

Crush Injuries

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Crush Injuries

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Summary

“I heard you speaking with Dis.” Dwalin’s eyes flashed up to look at hers before casting aside. They were filled with emotions Bell couldn’t quite read. “Is it true then? You wish to leave us.”

There were a million things Bell could have expected him to say, this was not one of them.

“I can hardly stay. Hell, you’ve given me reason enough to cast away my doubts on the matter, you can barely even look at me.”

Notes

Whumptober Day 14: Crush Injuries

I swear the updates will keep coming, I’ve gotten so behind. They’ll definitely be out of order.

Hope you enjoy this one! I’ve always had a soft spot for Bilbo and Dwalin.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Erebor quickly became quite the metropolis in the months following what became known as the battle of the five armies. Dwarrow spread wide across middle earth traveled to partake in a life that was only known in childhood. It took a lot of hard work and more than a fair share of diplomatic meetings, but the payoff of a habitable homeland was worth it if only to see the smiling faces of the company. Many of them established notable stalls in the Erebolean markets, while others returned to their more governmental roles.

Thorin, Fili, and Kili were laid to rest in the heart of the mountain, their bodies collected from the battlefield post haste. Returned to the stone, the company showered them in khuzdul prayer that spoke of healing and recovery. Bell could only hope that they could smile upon their faces once more.

The arrival of Thorin's sister in the days following the battle allowed those uninjured in the company to take a deep breath. They could trust her to lead in the stead of the sons of Durin. Bell only spoke briefly with Dis, making note of her intentions to return to the Shire per Thorin's banishment. Thorin's forgiveness could not be counted on. Not when it was given in the throes of mortal pain. She couldn't allow herself to think that she could stay with them.

She returned to her quarters to gather her meager possessions. Her drive to return from whence she came was weak. There was nothing left for her there but a shell of a home, yet it hurt less than bearing the avoidance of her closest allies. Her mind raced constantly, and guilt ate her alive as she was lost to the idea that there was something she could have done to save them from the pain of a fallen leader.

A knock on her door pulled her away from the consuming thoughts, and she was shocked to see Dwalin gently pushing his way inside.

"Miss Baggins."

And if those words didn't hurt all on their own.

"Dwalin, please, don't treat me like a stranger after all this time."

He wouldn't even look her in the eye.

"I've begun to wonder if you are."

His gaze was hard set into the floor. Bell could read the tension across his shoulders. Before she could respond, he spoke again, words focused and slow.

"I heard you speaking with Dis." His eyes flashed up to look at hers before casting aside. They were filled with emotions Bell couldn't quite read. "Is it true then? You wish to leave us."

There were a million things Bell could have expected him to say, this was not one of them.

"I can hardly stay. Hell, you've given me reason enough to cast away my doubts on the matter, you can barely even look at me."

Her words hit Dwalin as if they were a physical blow as he backed himself up against the door he'd closed behind him. They wronged her more than he imagined, for her to think they wished her gone.

She stepped forward putting him at arms distance. She'd never seen Dwalin like this. For the first time the hulking dwarf appeared small, trapped even.

"It is there that you are mistaken." His words rumbled with distaste. "I merely wish to understand why you would go. You've earned your place here more than anyone else."

"You would have me stay then, only to face the possibility of being thrown from a new home once Thorin returns to us." Bell threw her hands in the air out of frustration. "I can't rely on an apology given in the midst of battle. He was on death's door, Dwalin. He could have said anything!"

Underneath it all Bell was nervous. She'd been expecting an emotional blowout between her and Dwalin, but nothing like this. Something had been building between them on their journey. She began to rely on him for comfort, and if she thought about that particular feeling for too long she might realize the true reason why it hurt her so much to leave.

"I would never let those accusations stand. And if he fought it, which he wouldn't, myself along with the others would make him see reason."

Dwalin stepped up to meet her. His two large hands cupped her shoulders and squeezed with just enough pressure before he slid them down to take her hands in his.

"Bell, tell me you wish to stay."

"More than anything." Her eyes watered, the pain of her indecision coming to the surface.

"Then let me do this for you. We will worry about Thorin when the time comes."

And in the Renaissance of Erebor Bell found great joy. After two months both Thorin and his sister-sons returned from the depths of the mountain. There were stirrings of their awakening for weeks before Bell set eyes on them.

She had yet to see Thorin beyond quick glances from afar. They held his crowning not long after his return and she watched from the very corner of the throne room as Dwalin stood beside the royal family, axes bound to his back.

Dwalin never brought his work home with him and for that Bell was grateful. She could not be tempted by the inner workings of Ereboean government if it was not discussed. In her days with the company she liked to imagine she could be an ambassador. She cast those thoughts aside when she realized she still trembled in fear at the mention of the King.

Fili and Kili pounded down her door one night. They nearly bowled over Dwalin in an attempt to get to her, and she shrieked with joy when they swept her off her feet and into their arms. The fears she felt toward their uncle could never be extended to them. Having them in front of her once more seemed to heal another small piece of her broken heart.

They asked her all sorts of questions, but most of all they wanted to know when Dwalin would make an honest hobbit out of her. And if the big lug ever blushed it would have been at that line of questioning. Fili and Kili were relentless.

“We don’t have to change anything about our relationship,” Bell told him after Dwalin shooed the boys away. “We know exactly who we are to each other. I don’t care about anything else.”

He held her to him with gentle hands and when he kissed her she let out such soft sweet sounds.

“And I love you all the more for that.”

Her smile at his confession was the greatest gift he could ever ask for. He would do anything for that smile.

And their life continued on from there. Bell welcomed Dwalin home at the end of every long day and his rare days off were filled with hours of warming their bed. He was completely besotted.

He’d spent time with his brother when Thorin locked himself away in his office, speaking at length about the mine shafts that produced the best emeralds and when the best time to steal away to look for some might be.

Balin convinced him to delay no longer when he provided him with a small mithril letter opener. The two of them shared a laugh remembering Bell’s Sting. The most notable insult hurled toward her weapon was that it was barely more than a letter opener itself.

It would be the perfect thing to melt down and smith to make a bead.

The next morning on his way out the door he was set to head to the mines. Thorin had given him clearance to take a brief leave to pursue the next step in his courtship of Bell. In the coming week he would spend his working hours acquiring materials and smithing a work of fine craftsmanship for Bell to display at the end of what would be a braid of great significance for the two of them.

“My love,” Dwalin couldn’t help but kiss her once more before he left. “It may be a fine day to go visit Ori in the library. Give him some relief from Balin. He can be such a bore when given the chance.”

Bell laughed before slapping her hand against his chest.

“Now don’t go bad mouthing your brother for my entertainment. Of course I will go see Ori, it’s been much too long.”

Bell was glad for the suggestion because her answer was true — it truly had been too long. She bounced around their quarters following Dwalin’s departure and baked a quick batch of almond cakes to bring with her.

When she sat down in the seat beside Ori he was startled but quickly recovered from such shock at the sight of his dear friend.

“Bell, my dear, how lovely it is to see you. To what do I owe the honor?”

She waved off the niceties and they quickly devolved into energetic conversation. Ori shared with her the discoveries he’d made in going through historic dwarven texts.

He told her about Aulë’s creation of the seven fathers and how Yavanna feared for her children in their wake. He said if dwarves only paid more attention to their ancestors that they had knowledge of hobbits for many ages now.

Yavanna and Manwë made sure that gentle creatures such as hobbits, and her flora and fauna, were protected from the harsh natures of the creators’ other children. Their territories stretched far and wide for only a brief time before the Shire called to them.

“There may have even been children born between hobbits and dwarves in those times. I’ve not found any medical records pertaining to such but there are a variety of personal accounts in journals. It was so long ago that I’m sure there’s no true physical representation in appearance anymore,” Ori paused to blush, “but I thought you might like to hear that even history is on the side of yours and Dwalin’s relationship.”

Bell wiped away a few stray tears that escaped during Ori’s explanation. She held a hand to her stomach, considering the possibility, and her heart was warmed by the very thought.

“That is quite a beautiful piece of history, Ori. I’m glad that the dwarrow of Erebor have you in their halls to preserve it all.”

Their conversation had felt almost other worldly, but they were snapped back to reality by the sound of thunderous boots approaching at a wicked pace.

From the stacks emerged one Thorin Oakenshield. As soon as he set his eyes on Bell his confident strides seemed to falter. It made Bell feel strong to see him out of his depth.

“Bell, I wish this reintroduction could have been done differently, but you must come with me.” The king looked like he’d sucked on a lemon, looking anywhere but at her.

Something didn’t seem right — he was alone. Dwalin nearly always flanked the king and he was nowhere to be found.

Her hesitation to provide an answer to his demand clearly tested the scraps of his patience, but she couldn’t help it. Even after all this time, even as he faltered, he made her nervous. No matter how she tried, she couldn’t shake the memory of his threats on the ramparts.

“Thorin I don’t—”

“It’s Dwalin.” Those two words carried such weight. “I wouldn’t disturb you for anything but that of the utmost importance. I only wish to give you the time and space you deserve. I have been stripped of the ability to do such a thing now.”

Bell was out of her seat and matching Thorin's pace out of the library's halls without further protest.

"Where is he?" Bell could hear her heart pounding in her ears.

"The infirmary. There was a collapse in one of the veins in the emerald mines." Thorin stuck to strictly business. It was clear that he was battling both discomfort and worry — emotions he wasn't used to feeling.

"Dwalin helped to free some of the miners from the wreckage. After moving some of the rubble, there was another tremor. His leg was pinned down under a significant weight and was freed from it not long ago. Oin has been with him since and let me know where to find you."

It felt like her head was spinning.

"What was Dwalin even doing down there?" She asked, trying to stop herself from becoming hysterical. "Your sister cleared the mines for work with him at her side before you even came back."

They reached the door of the infirmary before she could get an answer from Thorin, but he held the door open for her to enter and heard him say that it *wasn't his story to tell*.

The infirmary was a mess of injured dwarves. Beds were occupied with dirt-caked miners with bandaged limbs, and healers were stitching many a flesh wound.

Bell weaved her way through the crowded room to Oin's station and couldn't help but let out a sob at what she saw.

Dwalin was sprawled out on a cot and his leg was suspended in a sling. It was covered in layers of plaster and more than a few of his fingers were in splints.

He was covered in soot and grime, and blood caked the dirt on his skin.

Oin rushed to her.

"I would urge you not to worry, but I know you better than that."

She let out a bark of a laugh, sounding more than a little manic.

"He has broken bones in his foot and ankle that I've been able to confirm, but we've bound the leg to just below the knee for safe measure. The fingers that are splinted are mostly sprained from his attempt to pull the fallen stones away from the ground."

He rested a hand on her shoulder in an attempt to calm her.

"There's no life threatening injury here, lass. He experienced no head trauma which is more than I can say for many of the miners. You've given your heart to the strongest dwarf I know. I have no doubt that he will return to us as soon as the pain tincture wears off."

Bell remained in the infirmary for some time. She'd taken a small cloth and began to clean away the dust and debris from Dwalin's face. She moved to his neck and the exposed parts of his arms. She rang the cloth out until the bowl of water she'd procured turned black.

When the dwarf woke from his herbal induced slumber and saw Bell beside him, his face contorted into a look of shame, if not embarrassment.

Bell would have nothing of the sort.

"Dwalin," she sank her fingers into his beard. "Thorin came to me as soon as he heard. I'm glad that you've returned to us before nightfall."

His face switched to that of guilt.

"I've told him to leave you be. I'll speak with him—"

"He was nothing but respectful and shockingly appears to know his place, but Dwalin I must know — what in all of Arda had you down in the mines?" She let her worry bleed through. These last few hours were taxing.

"It's so unlike you to forgo your duty. Thorin refused to give answer to my question."

"I wish to give you everything that I am." Dwalin sounded wistful and more than a little drowsy. "I wanted to show you this in the only way I've ever been taught how."

He went to reach into his pocket but the splints stopped him from doing so successfully. Bell pushed her small hand inside and pulled out an uncut emerald. It seemed to capture any light that fell upon it and Bell looked to Dwalin in awe.

"I never thought I would be here, Bell. I've spent the last hundred years since I came of age expecting to live out my life as nothing more than the king's guard. Allow me the time to heal and I will do right by you for all my days."

"I want nothing more than to be yours, be it through bead or vow — I would be honored."

End Notes

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